

*The best Improvement of publick Mercies and
Deliverances; or, ENGLAND's Duty and
Interest;*

Represented in a

S E R M O N

TO THE

S O C I E T Y

That supports the

Lord's-Day Morning Lecture

A T

Little St. H E L E N S,

AUGUST. 2. MDCCXXXVI.

In Commemoration of the Happy Succession of GEORGE I. to the Throne of these Realms, *August 1. 1714.*

By WILLIAM LANGFORD, M.A.

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L O N D O N,

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TO THE
GENTLEMEN
Who support the
Lord's-Day Morning Lecture
AT
Little St. HELEN S.

GENTLEMEN,



OUR united requests, and the concurring advice of several of my reverend fathers and brethren, who heard the following plain discourse, have now brought it into the world.

It was thought, that the publication of this discourse (notwithstanding the many imperfections

DEDICATION.

tions of it) might be of some service in the present conjuncture, in order to vindicate the body of protestant dissenters from the suspicion of disloyalty, and to give a repeated assurance to the world that we continue in the same dutiful sentiments and good dispositions toward his majesty's person and government, of which there have been the most indubitable evidences in our past conduct.

As this was a reason that appeared to me to have great weight in it, it over-ruled my own inclinations, and led me to a chearful compliance with your desires.

If it shall please God to bless any of my weak endeavours for the advancement of his glory, in the interests of truth, religion, and liberty; and in particular, if any thing here offered to the publick shall be of use to souls, in the review and improvement of God's mercies; this will be an inexpressible pleasure and reward to,

GENTLEMEN,

Your affectionate humble servant,

In the gospel of Christ,

W. Langford.



I S A M. xii. 24.

*Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth,
with all your heart; for consider how great
things he hath done for you.*



THESE words are part of *Samuel's* speech to the children of *Israel* on a day of publick thanksgiving, when they had with one heart and voice submitted themselves to the government of *Saul*, and were rejoicing together with their king in an eminent salvation which God had by his hand wrought for them.

I SHALL not enter into the particulars of this wise and excellent speech, but confine my thoughts to the words now read to you; in which the prophet (having in the preceding verse promised the people an interest

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in his prayers) directs them to the good and the right way to publick and personal happiness: *Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, with all your heart.* Preserve in your minds a deep and lively sense of the infinite perfections of God, your creator, benefactor, lawgiver, redeemer and judge; pay all the awful and solemn regards you owe to him, and serve him by a life of unfeigned faith, and diligent obedience. This is the sum of true religion; and 'tis of absolute necessity to the happiness of your nation, and of every particular person in it. Don't think your king can save you without your God; but adhere to his pure worship, and observe his statutes, and it shall be well with you and your children for ever.

THE prophet inforces this counsel by a most important and affectionate motive, in the next words; *For consider how great things he hath done for you.* God hath done great things for you; he hath brought you out of *Egypt* with an out-stretched arm, to the land which he espied for you; he hath subdued your enemies under you, given you many wonderful deliverances since the time of your settlement in this land, and hitherto

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hitherto he has governed you in a way of peculiar condescension and goodness, by persons whom he hath raised up by his immediate appointment and will to be your deliverers and judges. These and other great mercies which God has vouchsafed to you, ought to be consider'd by you as special motives to his fear and service. And if these things be thus wisely considered and improved, you may hope to continue still a happy people, under the government of a prosperous king: *But* (says he, in the words following my text) *if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.* Ye and your king are now come into a near relation to each other: so long as this relation subsists, your interests will be mutual and inseparable, like that of the head and members in the natural body; and therefore if you join together in rebellion against the laws of God (who is still your supreme king) you shall assuredly be involved in one common ruin. This is an awful threatning, that well deserves our serious attention in this land. But I am to discourse on the advice which the prophet here gives, in order to the prevention of so dreadful a calamity. *Only fear the Lord,*

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and

*and serve him in truth, with all your heart ;
for consider how great things he has done for
you.*

FROM which words I shall take occasion
to shew,

I. THAT real religion (or the fear and service of God) is necessary to the happiness of every particular person, and the only sure foundation of the peace and welfare of publick societies.

II. THAT a people for whom God has done great things in the course of his providence, are laid under special obligations to the practice of religion.

III. THAT they ought to consider the great things which God has done for them, in order to their fulfilment of their obligations.

WHEN I have spoken briefly to these heads, I shall apply the discourse to the great and happy event which we this day commemorate.

THE *first thing* to be spoken to, is, That real religion (or the fear and service of God) is necessary to the happiness of particular

cular persons, and the only sure foundation of the peace and welfare of publick societies. True religion is as necessary to the happiness of every man, as breath is to his natural life. 'Tis the great end of our beings, the one thing needful, without which we can have no solid content and tranquillity of mind in this life, nor any just hopes of the pure, perfect and endless felicity of the life to come; and therefore 'tis declared to be the true wisdom of every man, by the great author and infallible judge of all excellency: Job xxviii. 28. *Unto man he said, behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding.* And in another place, the divine goodness expresses its kind regards, after the manner of men, in this affectionate language: *Oh, that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always; that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever; Deut. v. 29.*

As religion is for the advantage of every individual, so it is the firmest and best foundation of civil society: for what can be so awful a restraint from those vices which are, in their own nature, pernicious to society; what can be so powerful a
motive

motive to all the virtues which in themselves are beneficial to mankind, as the belief of a God, a providence, and a future state of recompences, especially as these principles are represented and enforc'd in the christian revelation? How weak and ineffectual would human laws generally be found, were they not aided and strengthen'd by the operations of conscience, and the hopes and fears of eternity? And when the principles of religion are deeply imprinted on mens hearts by the good Spirit of God, and they are led into the habitual uniform practice of the duties which it enjoins (the personal and relative duties) they cannot fail of being happy in themselves, and useful to others.

VITAL religion, seated in the heart, will dispose magistrates to govern with justice, and mercy, and a generous concern for the publick welfare: 'twill lead subjects to obey them that have the rule over them, rendering to *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsar's*, as well as to God the things that are God's: it will teach men to use their best endeavours to live peaceably with all, and make them careful to do unto others what they would reasonably desire that others

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thers should do unto them in like circumstances: in a word, it will prompt men to do all the good they can, in their several stations, to the community of mankind whereof they are members.

THUS it appears, from the nature and genius of true religion, that, so far as it spreads, order and peace, harmony and happiness will go along with it, from lesser to greater societies; and were it universally to prevail in this earth, it would make it a glorious image of heaven itself.

BUT besides the natural tendency of religion to the happiness of society, we must still remember, that a just God governs in all the kingdoms of men; and since nations must be rewarded and punish'd in this life, or not at all (for they will not subsist as nations in a future state) 'tis therefore reasonable to think, that the righteous governour of the world will protect and bless virtuous nations, and sooner or later rebuke and punish a sinful people. The *Jews* are a very awful and monitory example of this truth: Publick happiness or misery did successively take place in their civil constitution, according to the prevalence of national virtue or immorality. So long as they were free
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from idolatry, and in any good measure observed the laws of God, they were a prosperous and happy people; a people saved of the Lord, who was the shield of their help, and of their excellency: Their country was a land which the Lord their God cared for; his eyes were always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year; *Deut. xi. 12.* Under the divine protection, one of them could chase a thousand, and two of them put ten thousand to flight, as it is express'd, *Deut. xxxii. 30.* It must be confess'd, some of the ceremonies of the *Jewish* religion were very burdensom and expensive to them; but then they had a promise of God's extraordinary favour and blessing in the way of obedience. There was indeed one of the laws of *Moses* that seem'd, in its natural tendency, subversive of the welfare of the nation; that law (I mean) which commanded all the men to go three times a year to worship in *Jerusalem*, at the feasts of *Passover*, *Pentecost*, and *Tabernacles*. At these seasons how easily might their land have been invaded by an enemy? but there was a remarkable promise given to them, to prevent their fears; *Exod. xxxiv. 24.* *No man shall desire thy*

thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year. God promises here to restrain their enemies in such a manner, that they should not so much as think of invading their country at the times of their festivals, when they had the fairest opportunity of success. Thus was God pleas'd to encourage their obedience, and make their duty in every particular consistent with, and conducive to their interest. Indeed there is no nation upon earth at this day that can lay claim to such a special relation to God, as the children of *Israel* stood in by virtue of the peculiar covenant made with them; nevertheless the justice of providence seems to stand engag'd to make a difference (in due time) between nations, according to the general spread of virtue or vice among them.

LET this suffice for the *first thing* propos'd, which was to shew, That real religion (or the fear and service of God) is necessary to the happiness of every particular person, and is the only sure foundation of the peace and welfare of public societies. We go on,

II. To shew, That when God has, in the course of his providence, done great things

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for a people, they are laid under special obligations to the practice of religion. As publick judgments and calamities should awaken a careless people to repentance (for doubtless when the judgments of God are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants thereof should learn righteousness) so publick mercies and deliverances call a people to universal gratitude, piety, and obedience. How often does God rehearse his mercies to the children of *Israel*, as motives to the diligent observation of his laws? The ten commandments were enforc'd by the consideration of the special benefits he had conferred upon them: *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage*; *Exod. xx. 3.* In my text they are excited to their duty by a review of the great things God had done for them. And you cannot but take notice, in the writings of the prophets, how frequently they aggravate the sins of *Israel*, by a recollection of God's extraordinary favours communicated to them. *Isa. i. 2.* *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel,*

Israel, a land of darkness? Jer. ii. 31. and Micah vi. 2, 3, 4. Hear, O ye mountains, the Lord's controversy, and, ye strong foundations of the earth, for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel. O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, &c. And what an awful passage is that, Amos iii. 2. You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for your iniquities.

O England! thou hast been like to Israel in mercies and deliverances; too like in disobedience to thy great benefactor: God forbid, that final impenitence should bring upon thee a destruction like to that of Israel. Know thy peculiar obligations to the love and service of that God who has redeemed thee more than once from the hand of thine enemies, and has stretched out his almighty arm to save thee from indescribable miseries, when thou wast on the very brink of them. O! hearken to the voice of his kind providence, lest his soul depart from thee; lest he make thee desolate, a land not inhabited, or the habitation of darkness and cruelty. But this leads us to the

Third thing propos'd to be discours'd of, viz. That a people for whom God has done great things, ought to consider his doings, in order to the fulfilment of their special obligations to his fear and service. The children of *Israel* are directed in my text to a serious consideration of God's mercies, as the proper means of affecting their hearts with a sense of them. The greatest benefits of providence will be lost upon a person or people, if they be not seriously observed and considered. And what can so well deserve to be considered by reasonable beings, as the glorious and honourable works of the Most High? and more especially those extraordinary operations of his providence, whereby he calls people in the most awful manner to attend, to stand still, and behold the salvation of God; to see, and know, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of *Israel* hath created it?

WHEN the affairs of the natural or the moral world go on in a smooth undisturbed course, men are apt to fall asleep in the calm, and to forget the all-governing providence of God; but when he lifts up his
hand,

hand, and sheweth himself (as the scripture speaks) in great and publick acts of judgment or mercy, what stupidity is it not to regard, what ingratitude to shut our eyes on such eminent appearances of the divine power, justice, and goodness? Nevertheless, this inobservance of God's marvellous works is a very common sin: in some it is the effect of atheistical principles, which, by a kind of violence, they have imposed on their own minds; but in most it seems to be owing to a wretched estrangement of their hearts from the blessed God, encreased by the cares, and pleasures, and immoderate pursuits of this world. 'Tis however a most aggravated and inexcusable sin; an abuse of our reasonable powers, that sinks men below the brute creation: *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider; Isa. i. 3.* 'Tis a wicked thing, because it robs God of the glory due to his name, and counter-acts the ends of his dispensations: *Let favour be shewn to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord; Isa. xxvi. 10.* And for these reasons it is a
sin

fin that provokes God's high displeasure against persons and societies that are chargeable with it. A woe is pronounced upon them that had musick and wine in their feasts; *But they regarded not the work of the Lord, neither considered the operation of his hand; Isa. v. 12. and Psal. xxviii. 5. Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operations of his hand, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.*

You see then how much it is the concern of a people for whom God has done great things, to consider his works. And let me observe here, that the wonderful works of God are not only to be regarded by those that are eye-witnesses to them; but the knowledge of these things should be transmitted, as an inheritance, to late posterity.

GOD made his marvellous works to be remembered among the *Jews*, by instituting certain festivals for that end, and charging the people to instruct their children in the reasons of them, that there might be a perpetual commemoration of his benefits among them. Of this we have an account, Psal. lxxviii. 5, 6, 7. *For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they*

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they should make them known unto their children. That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children. That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. Many and marvellous are the deliverances which God has wrought for us in the British islands, from the time of the Reformation to this day. He has saved us from the secret conspiracies and open attempts of our restless and cruel enemies. The preservation of the protestant interest in these lands, has been so surprizing an effect of the power and goodness of God, that we may compare it to Moses's bush that burned with fire, but was not consumed because the Lord was in the midst of it. Or we may apply to this matter what Jacob said of his son Joseph; The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; Gen. xlix. 23, 24. We ought to review these our publick mercies, and to do what in us lies to propagate the memory of them to all succeeding generations, that not only we our selves,

selves, but those that shall come after us, may be excited to a becoming gratitude to the God of heaven, and a diligent observation of his laws.

AND this leads me, in compliance with the end and just expectations of this Assembly, to assist you (the best I can) in a pious recollection of one of the greatest blessings *Britain* ever received, the succession of *George I.* to the throne of these realms: A blessing for which not only we who dissent from the established form of religion in this land, but the whole protestant interest, is unspeakably indebted to providence: a blessing that includes our civil rights and religious privileges, all that is sacred and dear to us, and the hopes of ages to come. I shall give you but a short history of this ever-memorable event, and of the remarkable steps of providence that led to it.

THE present royal family descended from *Frederic V.* elector *Palatine* of the *Rhine*, who in the year 1613. was married to princess *Elizabeth*, daughter of king *James I.* of *England*, and some time after was elected king of *Bohemia*. I shall not enlarge on the various conditions of this illustrious prince,
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the loss of his kingdom, his flight to *Holland*, the obscurity in which he lived there with his wife and children for the space of twenty eight years, the special care of providence over this noble family, from whence a race of princes was to spring, to be the great guardians of our religion and liberties; nor shall I particularly take notice of the means whereby this family was restored to their antient dominions; but go on to an event that lies nearer to the mercies we commemorate this day, I mean, their being declared heirs presumptive to the crown of these realms, in the last year of king *William's* reign. The entail of the crown being at that time limited to the lives of king *William* and princess *Anne*, to prevent the dreadful danger of a popish succession, an act was made, declaring the most illustrious princess *Sophia*, electress and duchess dowager of *Hanover*, to be the next in right of succession to the crown, after the demises of king *William* and princess *Anne*, with their respective issue; and the crown to remain and continue to the said princess, and the heirs of her body being protestants. Thus king *William*, of immortal memory, finished his glorious work. He would have

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thought it but half done (as an ingenious writer observes) if he had delivered only one generation from popery and slavery; and therefore made it his whole care, and spent the last remains of his invaluable life, in contriving how the most pure religion, and the best laws in the universe, might be transmitted to late posterity. This act of settlement, as it was the grand bulwark of the protestant interest, has for that reason been violently opposed by the enemies of liberty and the reformation. I need not largely represent the endeavours that were made use of to defeat it in the last unhappy years of the queen's reign. Our whole constitution was then in eminent danger; the glorious revolution was attacked and vilified, by the inhuman doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance; the *Hanoverian succession* was manifestly struck at; and the protestant dissenters, on account of their hearty zeal for it, seem to have been doomed to utter destruction: for what less could we infer from such a beginning as the *Schism-bill*, which (if it had taken place) would not only have excluded the *dissenters* from all places of service under the government, but have deprived them

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at the same time of their natural right of educating their children according to the dictates of their own consciences? I chuse not to say what a reproach this bill was to the name of a *christian*, a *protestant*, and an *Englishman*; but rather to adore the goodness of God, in delivering us and our children from the dreadful effects of it.

WHEN our fears rose highest, and our hearts were ready to fail in the prospect of those things that were coming to pass, and were even at the door; that very day, in which our yoke was to have been laid upon us, it pleased God to effect our deliverance, by the succession of *George I.* whose name shall stand in the *British annals*, next to that of *Great William*, as the second deliverer sent by a kind providence to save these nations from the return of popish darkness and tyranny. This was the doing of the Lord, and it was marvellous in our eyes. Who would have thought that a few days should have put an end to our fears? and resettled our trembling constitution on that firm foundation on which it now stands, and (we hope) shall stand to the latest ages? But as the heavens are high above the earth, so far are God's thoughts and his ways

above ours. O! what joy filled our hearts, and shone in our faces, at the first approach of this salvation! We were like men that dream, scarce believed our surprising happiness: we said one to another (and with good reason) the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. And shall we not be always mindful of the great things which he hath done for us? how happy have been the effects of this deliverance? how numerous were the blessings of the reign of our late gracious sovereign? I don't pretend to describe, but shall we ever forget, the resplendent virtues of that most excellent prince? his admirable wisdom and penetration; the resolution and firmness of his great mind; the steadiness of his conduct; his impartial justice; and that singular goodness and clemency that adorned his *person* and *government*? Shall we ever forget his paternal care for the welfare of all his subjects; his zeal for the *protestant interest* at home and abroad? and particularly shall we not with the deepest gratitude remember his *generous ardor* in the cause of *liberty*, and his goodness to us protestant dissenters? for to his resolution and conduct, we were (under providence) chiefly

chiefly indebted for our deliverance from that heavy oppression which our enemies would have brought upon us and our children.

THESE (my brethren) are delightful subjects of review, and great arguments to pious gratitude.

AND when it pleased God, by a sudden stroke, to take from us the precious life of our late king, this afflictive providence has been followed with manifold mercies, in the just and gracious reign of his great successor *George II.* who delights in the prosperity and happiness of his people; protects all his subjects in their legal rights and and privileges; governs by law, not by arbitrary will; maintains our *liberties* and *properties*, and the toleration of protestant dissenters, so that we worship without fear of molestation in our separate assemblies, according to the sentiments of our own minds. What would our forefathers have given for this inestimable mercy? The review of their condition should make us very thankful for our happier circumstances.

AND it must be remembered among our publick blessings, that we have a queen whose piety and other amiable virtues have
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been so universally and justly celebrated : O ! may they be like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day ! And our present mercies are crowned with the joyful prospect of their continuance from generation to generation, by a race of princes descended from their majesties ; and the marriage of two of them into two of the most illustrious families in *Europe* for the defence of liberty and protestantism, is a presage of great good to us and our posterity, and merits the applauses and congratulations of all the lovers of our religion and country.

THUS we have taken a short view of the great things God hath done for us in these nations. Permit me, before I conclude, to exhort you to a suitable improvement of all our publick mercies, in the ways of gratitude and obedience. In the general, the duty to which we are called, is that which my text recommends ; *Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart.* This is God's voice to *Great Britain and Ireland* ; may it be more generally attended to, and obeyed among us. I would suggest a few particulars for your assistance in this great and comprehensive duty. And,

I. LET

I. LET us bless and adore the God of our salvation. Publick mercies call for publick gratitude to God. O! let us praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works towards us: let us sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his mighty acts with rejoicing. Praise thy God, O *Britain*, for he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates, he hath blessed thy children within thee. You (my brethren) are at this time assembled more especially for the work of praise: Come then let us offer up to God, through Jesus Christ, our united and most affectionate thanksgivings. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be the praise.*

Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us a prey to the teeth of our enemies; our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escap'd; our help is in the name of the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

AND while we are thus praising God, let us remember that Jesus Christ is the administrator of divine providence. All the benefits of providence, whether publick or private, come through his hands; for he hath all power in heaven and upon earth.

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He is the Lord of the universe, as well as the head of his body the church; *worthy* is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and honour, glory and blessing: let us therefore ascribe honour, and glory, and power, to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.

2. LET the consideration of past deliverances lead us to put our trust in God for all the blessings we do, or shall stand in need of. We have not rendered to the Lord according to the benefits which we have received from his hand; but, notwithstanding our too general ingratitude, so long as God reserves to himself a considerable number of pious souls, who think of his loving-kindness, and endeavour to make a right improvement of it, we may hope that he will strengthen the things which he hath wrought for us, and continue with us the tokens of his favour. Were there such a spirit of *piety* and *gratitude* breathing among us, as there should be, and as there has been at some seasons in this land, we might bid defiance to our adversaries, in the words of the prophet, *Isa. viii. 9, 10. Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; take counsel together, and it shall come*

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come to nought, speak the word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us. We might say with the Psalmist in holy triumph, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be removed into the midst of the sea; the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge; Psal. xlv. 1, 2, 7.

THE great degeneracy of our age seems to forbid this degree of assurance; but still good men have reason to encourage themselves in the Lord their God, and to reflect on his former loving-kindnesses as grounds of hope, and arguments in their prayers for a sinful people: Lord, wilt thou not ordain peace for us, for thou hast wrought all our works in us? But that such hopes and prayers may not be disappointed, let us

3. FEAR the Lord and his goodness. The wonderful appearances of the great God in our preservation, should fill our souls with a holy awe of his majesty, and dread of his displeasure. This was the effect of God's goodness to the *Jews*, on the mind of pious *Ezra*, who, in the review of what he had done for them, breaks out into these expressions of devout fear: *Seeing that thou, our*
E God,

God, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this; should we again break thy commandments, wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping? Ezra ix. 13, 14.

WOE to us, if God should forsake us, if he that has once and again saved us from impending destruction, should become our enemy, and fight against us; 'tis in vain for us to trust in our riches, power, policy or confederacies, &c. alas! what guards are these against offended omnipotence? let us therefore fear lest, by our abuse of God's goodness, we should provoke him to destroy us after he hath done us good, and to say as he did to the children of *Israel*; Judges x. 11, 12, 13. *Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites; from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites did oppress you, and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand; yet ye have forsaken me, wherefore I will deliver you no more.* They were a long time the monuments of divine patience, but their sins went on and grew greater from age to age, till at length judgment came

came upon them to the uttermost. That this may not be our case,

4. LET the mercies of God lead us to repentance. He has been very gracious to us, and tried us with lesser judgments and signal mercies through a course of many years. His providence has said concerning us, what his prophet declared to his antient people: *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I set thee as Adma? How shall I make thee as Zeboim?* But if all his dispensations be neglected and misimproved, if vice shall still go on uncorrected; if profaneness, impiety and inidelity, licentiousness in principle and practice, drunkenness, riot and uncleannels, wrath and uncharitable divisions, with the many other horrid sins of our day, shall generally prevail and encrease, what will be the end of these things? will not God be avenged on such a nation as this? We ought not to be secure and fearless in such a state of things; but let us be persuaded to give glory to God by repentance, before our feet tumble on the dark mountains; let every one of us bewail the decay of piety, and the abounding of iniquity, and let us sigh and mourn for the abominations that are done in the

midst of the land; let us present ourselves to God a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable in his sight, which is our reasonable service. O! sinner, for Christ's sake, for thy own soul's sake, for the sake of thy dear relatives, and of all the world round about thee, go not on to encrease the stock of our national guilt, but fly without delay to the mercy of God, thro' the mediation of Christ, by a sound repentance, and faith unfeigned. And thou, degenerate christian, too, let me entreat thee to consider thy ways, and turn again to the Lord; apply thy self with renewed life and zeal to the work of personal and family religion. And give me leave here (my brethren) to ask whether we, who are protestant dissenters, are not chargeable with sad declensions from the eminent piety and virtue of our ancestors? I would not diminish nor overlook any of those good things that yet remain with us; but have not we departed too much from the exemplary goodness of our forefathers? from that holy, humble, peaceable and heavenly temper and practice which adorned their profession, and honourably distinguished their names in the world? And if this be so, should we
not

not think ourselves particularly concerned in the work of repentance and reformation? This is necessary to the acceptance of our thanksgivings for publick mercies, and is never more seasonable than when we are making our grateful acknowledgments of the divine goodness to us.

5. LET us learn from the blessings we now commemorate, to set a due value on our holy religion and christian privileges. Let us think by what amazing interpositions the providence of God has hitherto preserved them, and how dismal our condition would have been without them. How wretched a people are they who are subject to popish superstition, idolatry, and tyranny? denied the free use of their bible, and the benefit of Christ's pure worship and ordinances, which are the stated means of salvation, and at the same time oppressed in their temporal interests by the exorbitant pride and avarice of their priests? let us express our gratitude to God for the light and numerous blessings of the *Reformation*, which through his adorable goodness we still enjoy, by a suitable regard to his word, day and institutions; and let us take heed that we do not fall into that indifferency and coldness

coldness of spirit with reference to sacred things, which is the reigning disease of our age, and the first step to infidelity or an immoral life. Let us farther be exhorted,

6. To cultivate a spirit of catholick love and unity. Let us endeavour to strengthen the protestant interest (which has been so much the care of providence) by our observation of our saviour's dying commandment of brotherly love; let us love all who appear to be good christians, however they differ from us in the extra-essentials of religion; and let us have fervent charity among ourselves, be kind and tender-hearted, forgiving and forbearing one another; let us not allow in ourselves the least measure of that persecuting and bitter spirit which we so justly condemn in the papists, as one of the marks of antichrist.

FINALLY, let us persevere in our affection and duty to our most gracious sovereign. It was as unjust a charge as any that was cast upon the christian religion in the first age, that the principles of it were subversive of civil government, and had a tendency to turn the world up-side down. The apostles took great care to remove this bar to the progress of the gospel, by expressing their
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utter abhorrence of those that spake evil of dignities, and despised dominions; and by exhorting the new converts very often, in their sacred epistles, to be subject to the higher powers, as an ordinance of God, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake; and to render custom to whom custom was due, tribute to whom tribute, honour to whom honour, fear to whom fear: and the *primitive christians*, however they were traduced as troublers of cities, and disturbers of nations, were notwithstanding the most peaceable, patient, inoffensive and quiet members of civil society, that the world ever saw. Their holy religion made them gentle, harmless, and good subjects in all places where they lived, and taught them to extend their benevolence to those unrighteous princes who were their implacable enemies and persecutors; as *Tertullian* declares in the name of the christian world in his days.

“ *All of us* pray always for all governors,
“ that their lives may be long, their go-
“ vernment peaceful, their families safe,
“ their armies strong, their council faith-
“ ful, their subjects dutiful, the world quiet
“ around them, and that they may have
“ all things good for them, as men and
“ princes.”

“princes*.” Did they thus pray for princes that were heathens and persecutors, who rendered nothing to them for their goodwill but reproaches and bonds, imprisonment and death; did every thing they could to put an end to those assemblies in which such intercessions were offered up to God for them; O! what zealous affection and duty should we (my brethren) express to a christian and protestant government, under which we have the happiness to live, and are supported in the quiet possession of so many blessings, both civil and sacred? Let us go on to give all possible proofs of our love and obedience to our most gracious sovereign, and do all we can in our several stations to suppress unreasonable jealousies and discontents, and to promote the ease and felicity of his reign. But why do I enlarge upon this subject in an assembly of protestant dissenters? Forgive me (my brethren) if I have said too much; my design has not been to accuse you of the least disaffection, but only to excite you to perse-

* *Tertul. Apol. cap. 30.* Precantes sumus omnes pro omnibus imperatoribus, vitam illis prolixam, imperium securum, exercitus fortes, senatum fidelem, populum probum, orbem quietum, & quæcunque hominis & Cæsaris vota sunt.

vere in your duty with unshaken constancy and delight.

AND among other duties, let me in the close of this discourse recommend that of fervent and daily prayer to God for the king's *person and family*, as well in our private as our publick devotions. The apostle *Paul* delivers this counsel with great earnestness; 1 *Tim. ii. 1, 2, 3. I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.*

IN particular, let us heartily commend our sovereign, in his absence from us at this time, to the protection of providence; beseeching God, who giveth salvation to kings, to preserve his life and health, to protect him in all places, and bless us in due season with his safe and prosperous return to these his *British* dominions.

LET us implore a divine conduct and benediction in behalf of our gracious queen *Caroline*, and all the royal issue; begging
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of God to replenish them with his heavenly grace, and adorn them with all the virtues suitable to their high stations, that not only we, but succeeding generations may rise up and bless the Lord for the mercies we this day commemorate. *Amen.*

F I N I S.



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